

HEALTH INSURANCE TAX
DEDUCTIBILITY ACT**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1998. This bill is the same simple, common sense solution to a very complex and destructive problem in our society.

Since I came to Congress in 1992, we have debated health care reform and considered a wide range of proposals—all designed to insure a greater number of Americans. When President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) into law in 1996, everyone said Congress had taken the first step towards ensuring access to health insurance to more individuals and families.

Unfortunately, a study completed last year by the General Accounting Office shows us this goal has not been achieved. Although HIPAA did expand access to health insurance, it did nothing to ensure that Americans can afford health insurance. And as the GAO study recognized, affordability has become the major hurdle for the American family to clear.

In the past, Congress has passed initiatives to encourage and assist people to get health insurance. We allow employers who sponsor health insurance for their employees to deduct the employer's share of the premium as a business expense. We allow self employed people to deduct a percentage of the health insurance premium they purchase. Yet we provide no assistance or incentive for individuals whose employers do not provide health insurance.

The Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1999 will do just this. Under this legislation, individuals will be able to deduct a portion—linked to the deduction for the self insured—of the money they pay for health and long-term care insurance. This proposal will make health insurance more affordable for individuals and their families, which in turn, will give American families greater peace of mind.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to honor the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday we will be commemorating later this month. It is now over 30 years that his life was senselessly snuffed out by an assassin in Memphis, TN.

Following his death, I joined my colleagues in calling for the establishment of the third Monday in January to be a national holiday in honor of Rev. King. While this holiday is not ingrained in the American fabric of life, many of us are bittersweet regarding the message the holiday conveys. Too many Americans view Martin Luther King day as a holiday just

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for black people. Rev. King himself would be the first person to repudiate that attitude, for his message was for all people, of all races, creeds, colors and backgrounds. Today, in 1999, we should dedicate ourselves to remembering the universality of his message.

Dr. King contributed more to the causes of national freedom and equality than any other man or woman of our century. His achievements as an author and as a minister were surpassed only by his leadership, which transformed a torn people into a beacon of strength and solidarity, and united a divided nation under a common creed of brotherhood and mutual prosperity.

It was Dr. King's policy of nonviolent protest which served to open the eyes of our nation to the horrors of discrimination and police brutality. This policy revealed the Jim Crow laws of the South as hypocritical and unfair, and forced civil right issues into the national dialectic. It is due to the increased scope and salience of the national civil rights discussion that the movement achieved so much during its decade of our greatest accomplishment, from 1957 to 1968.

It was in 1955 that Dr. King made his first mark on the nation, when he organized the black community of Montgomery, AL, during a 382-day boycott of the city's bus lines. The boycott saw Dr. King and many other civil rights activists incarcerated prison as "agitators," but their efforts were rewarded in 1956, when the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the segregation practices of the Alabama bus system was unconstitutional, and demanded that blacks be allowed to ride with equal and indistinguishable rights. The result proved the theory of nonviolent protest in practice, and roused our nation to the possibilities to be found through peace and perseverance.

In 1963, Dr. King and his followers faced their most ferocious test, when they set a massive civil protest in motion in Birmingham, AL. The protest was met with brute force by the local police, and many innocent men and women were injured through the violent response. However, the strength of the police department worked against the forces of discrimination in the nation, as many Americans came to sympathize with the plight of the blacks through the sight of their irrational and inhumane treatment.

By August of 1963 the civil rights movement had achieved epic proportions, and it was in a triumphant and universal air that Dr. King gave his memorable "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In the next year, Dr. King was distinguished as Time magazine's Man of the Year for 1963, and he would later be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1964.

Throughout his remaining years, Dr. King continued to lead our nation toward increased peace and unity. He spoke out directly against the Vietnam War, and led our nation's War on Poverty, which he saw as directly involved with the Vietnam struggle. To Dr. King, the international situation was inextricably linked to the domestic, and thus it was only through increased peace and prosperity at home that tranquility would be ensured abroad.

When Dr. King was gunned down in 1968 he had already established himself as a na-

tional hero and pioneer. As the years passed his message continued to gather strength and direction, and it is only in the light of his multi-generational influence that the true effects of his ideas can be measured.

Dr. King was a man who lacked neither vision nor the means and courage to express it. His image of a strong and united nation overcoming the obstacles of poverty and inequality continues to provide us with an ideal picture of the "United" states which will fill the hearts of Americans with feelings of brotherhood and a common purpose of years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to bear in mind the courageous, dedicated deeds of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to join together on Monday, January 18, in solemn recollection of his significant contributions for enhancing human rights throughout our nation and throughout the world.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO REAU-
THORIZE THE FEDERAL AVIA-
TION ADMINISTRATION PRO-
GRAMS**HON. BUD SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing a simple authorization extension bill for the Federal Aviation Administration's programs. With the passage of this bill, \$10.3 billion for FAA would be authorized for 1999.

The Omnibus Appropriations bill passed at the end of last Congress extended FAA's Airport Improvement Program for 6 months. The bill I am introducing today would extend AIP until the end of the fiscal year and reauthorize two other FAA programs for 1999—Facilities and Equipment, and Operations.

The AIP program authorization expires on March 31, 1999. Since AIP is funded with Contract Authority, the expiration of Contract Authority means no further funding of the program. Without this extension, the nation's airports will stop receiving new airport grants. These grants fund projects such as runway extensions, taxiway constructions, and other airport capacity enhancing projects.

Aviation delays already cost the industry billions of dollars. According to the Air Transport Association, aviation delays in 1997 cost the air carriers \$2.4 billion. If this bill is not passed by March 31, 1999, the airport capacity enhancing projects supported by the AIP program could be delayed, possibly increasing the cost of delays in the future.

The bill also reauthorizes the formula that determines the Aviation Trust Fund contribution to the FAA's Operations account. In addition, the bill makes minor adjustments to the Airport Improvement Program formulas.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has always worked in a bipartisan fashion. I look forward to working with my colleagues; Congressman JIM OBERSTAR, Congressman JOHN DUNCAN, Jr., and Congressman BILL LIPINSKI, on this bill and other important aviation issues we will face during the 106th Congress.